



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/705,433	11/12/2003	Kanya Ishizaka	117730	4586
25944	7590	03/06/2007	EXAMINER	
OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC P.O. BOX 19928 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22320			TORRES, JOSE	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2624	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE		
3 MONTHS	03/06/2007	PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/705,433	ISHIZAKA, KANYA
	Examiner Jose M. Torres	Art Unit 2624

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-35 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-3,8-11,16-19,24-27 and 32-35 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 4-7,12-15,20-23 and 28-31 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 22 January 2004 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/09/2003.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:
 - Page 17 line 1: "image quality is perform d" should be -- image quality is performed --
 - Page 30 line 1: "edge portion may be reduc d" should be -- edge portion may be reduced --
 - Page 30 line 23: "an conversion error" should be -- a conversion error --
 - Page 32 line 1: "the conversion rror" should be -- the conversion error --
 - Page 35 line 23: "(see Fig. 2F)" should be -- (see Fig. 3F) --
 - Page 36 line 1: "memory r gion" should be -- memory region --
 - Page 42 line 22: "it is apparent" should be -- It is apparent --
 - Page 49 line 1: "domain block classifying s ction 32" should be -- domain block classifying section 32 --
 - Page 50 line 1: "a textur portion" should be -- a texture portion --
 - Page 53 line 1: "the natural imag" should be -- the natural image --
 - Page 54 line 1: "capable of nlarging" should be -- capable of enlarging --
 - Page 56 line 1: "th converting" should be -- the converting --

Appropriate correction is required.

2. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

4. Claim 34 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. The claim limitation "An image processing program" recited in line 1 is directed towards a program *per se*, which is functional descriptive material and can only be considered statutory when embodied on a computer readable medium so that its functionality can be realized by a computer.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claims 1, 2, 8-11, 18 and 24-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Moon et al. (US 5,701,369).

Re claim 1: Moon et al. disclose an image processing apparatus for performing an image quality improving processing of an image, comprising: a domain block extracting section (FIG. 3, "control unit **20** and Range Block Memory **40**") for extracting a domain block image (FIG. 1 "Range Block R_i ") from an original image (FIG. 1, "composite image **100**") in the unit of a first block unit (Col. 3 lines 34-56); a range block extracting section (FIG. 3, "control unit **20** and Domain Block Memory **30**") for extracting a range block image (FIG. 1, "Domain Block D_j ") from the original image in the unit of a second block unit which is larger than the first block unit with respect to the domain block image (Col. 3 lines 34-56); reduced range block forming section (FIG. 3, "control unit **20**") for reducing the extracted range block image to the size of the first block unit (Col. 5 lines 54-61); and an improved domain block forming section (FIG. 3, "control unit **20**") for performing a pixel value conversion with respect to the reduced range block image formed by the reduced range block forming section, and for outputting the pixel-value-converted reduced range block image as an improved domain block image (Col. 5 line 54 through Col. 6 line 14 and Col. 7 lines 31-36).

Re claim 2: Moon et al. disclose a similarity degree judging section (FIG. 3, "control unit **20**") for judging a similarity degree between the domain block image and the reduced range block image by the reduced range block forming section (Col. 6 lines 40-54), wherein the improved domain block forming section performs the pixel value conversion based upon the similarity degree obtained by

the similarity degree judging section ("maximum degree of similarity", Col. 6 lines 55-61).

Re claim 8: Moon et al. disclose the range block extracting section extracts the range block image which contains the domain block image extracted by the domain block extracting section as the range block image (FIG. 4A, Col. 5 lines 28-41).

Re claim 9: Moon et al. disclose the range block extracting section extracts a plurality of the range block images with respect to one of the domain block images (FIG. 4, Col. 5 lines 28-36); the reduced range block forming section executes a reducing processing as to the plurality of range block images (Col. 5 lines 54-61); and the similarity degree judging section selects a reduced range block image which is judged as the image having the highest similarity degree with respect to the domain block image among a plurality of the reduced range block images ("maximum degree of similarity", Col. 6 lines 40-61).

Re claim 10: Moon et al. disclose when a pixel value "z" of the reduced range block image is least-squares-approximated ("least square method") to the pixel value of the domain block image by a linear transformation "az + b" (Equation (1)), the similarity degree judging section Judges the reduced range block image having the smallest least squares error ("optimal m and n") as a most resemblant

reduced range block image having the highest similarity degree (FIG. 3, "slope and offset detector **50**" Col. 5 line 61 through Col. 6 line 39).

Re claim 11: Moon et al. disclose the improved domain block forming section forms the improved domain block image in such a way that the pixel value of the most resemblant reduced range block image is converted by the linear transformation "az + b" (Equation (1)) with employment of least squares coefficients "a" ("m") and "b" ("n"), which correspond to the most resemblant reduced range block image obtained by the similarity degree judging section (FIG. 3, "slope and offset detector **50**" Col. 5 line 61 through Col. 6 line 39).

Re claim 18: Moon et al. disclose an image processing method for performing an image quality improving processing of an image, comprising: extracting a domain block image ("range block") from an original image ("composite image") in the unit of a first block unit (FIG. 5, "step **501**" Col. 5 lines 28-33); extracting a range block image ("domain block") from the original image in the unit of a second block unit larger than the first block unit with respect to the domain block image (FIG. 5, "step **503**", Col. 5 lines 33-41); reducing a size of the extracted range block image to the size of the first block unit (FIG. 5, "step **507** Col. 5 lines 54-61); judging a similarity degree between the reduced range block image and the domain block image (FIG. 5, "step **513**", Col. 6 lines 40-54); and forming an improved domain block image based upon a result obtained by converting pixel

values as to the reduced range block image based upon the similarity degree
(Col. 5 line 54 through Col. 6 line 14 and Col. 7 lines 31-36)

Re claim 24: Moon et al. disclose the extracting of the range block image is performed in such a manner that the range block image contains the domain block image (FIG. 4A, Col. 5 lines 28-41).

Re claim 25: Moon et al. disclose when the range block image is extracted, a plurality of the range block images are extracted with respect to one of the domain block images (FIG. 4, Col. 5 lines 28-36); a reducing processing is performed as to the plurality of range block images respectively (Col. 5 lines 54-61); and a reduced range block image is selected which is judged as the image having the highest similarity degree with respect to the domain block image among a plurality of the reduced range block images ("maximum degree of similarity", Col. 6 lines 40-61).

Re claim 26: Moon et al. disclose when a pixel value "z" of the reduced range block image is least-squares-approximated ("least square method") to the pixel value of the domain block image by a linear transformation "az + b" (Equation (1)), the similarity degree judging processing is performed in such a manner that the reduced range block image having the smallest least square error ("optimal m and n") is judged as a most resemblant reduced range block image having the

highest similarity degree (FIG. 3, "slope and offset detector 50" Col. 5 line 61 through Col. 6 line 39).

Re claim 27: Moon et al. disclose a pixel value converting processing executed when the improved domain block image is formed is performed in such a manner that the pixel value of the most resemblant reduced range block image is converted by the linear transformation "az + b" (Equation (1)) with employment of least squares coefficients "a" ("m") and "b" ("n"), which correspond to the most resemblant reduced range block image obtained by the similarity degree judging section (FIG. 3, "slope and offset detector 50" Col. 5 line 61 through Col. 6 line 39).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:
 - (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.
8. Claims 3 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moon et al. in view of Jacquin ("Fractal Image Coding: A Review", Proceedings of the IEEE, Vol. 81, No. 10, Oct. 1993, pp. 1451-1465). The teachings of Moon et al. have been discussed above.

As to claims 3 and 19, Moon et al. fails to disclose a domain block classifying section for classifying a sort of the domain block image extracted by the domain block extracting section, wherein the domain block image other than the domain block image which has been classified to a previously determined sort is directly outputted as the improved domain block image.

Jacquin teaches a domain block classifying section ("Pools of Domain Blocks") for classifying a sort of the domain block image extracted by the domain block extracting section, wherein the domain block image other than the domain block image which has been classified to a previously determined sort is directly outputted as the improved domain block image (Section IV (B) "Pools of Domain Blocks", Page 1455, Cols. 1 and 2) as recited in claims 3 and 19.

Therefore, in view of Jacquin, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Moon et al.'s system and method by incorporating the Pool of Domain Blocks in order to preserve the nature of the domain blocks under the application of any transformation (Section IV (B)).

9. Claims 16, 17, 32 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moon et al. in view of Bonneau et al. (US 6,002,794). The teachings of Moon et al. have been discussed above.

10. Moon et al. further teaches the domain block extracting section extracts the domain block image in such a manner that the domain block image owns a cover portion on the original image (FIG. 1, Col. 3 lines 35-56) as recited in claims 16 and 32.

As to claims 16 and 32, Moon et al. fails to disclose an averaged value calculating section for calculating an average value with respect to pixels where a plurality of the improved domain block images are overlapped with each other.

Bonneau et al. teaches an averaged value calculating section for calculating an average value with respect to pixels where a plurality of the improved domain block images are overlapped with each other (FIG. 1, "step 107", Col. 8 lines 36-63, FIG. 4 "domain blocks 401" Col. 13 lines 30-52 and FIG. 18, "video encoding portion 1801" Col. 25 lines 22-36) as recited in claims 16 and 32.

Therefore, in view of Bonneau et al., it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Moon et al.'s system and method by incorporating the video encoding portion to calculate an average value and where the improved domain blocks images are overlapped with each other in order to increase the compression ratio and allow a faster processing (Col. 18 lines 33-35).

11. As to claims 17 and 33, Moon et al. fails to disclose the original image corresponds to a color image, and the range block extracting section extracts the range block images from relatively same positions as to the respective color components of the original image.

Bonneau et al. teaches the original image corresponds to a color image (FIG. 19, Col. 26 lines 9-19), and the range block extracting section (FIG. 18, "video encoding portion 1801") extracts the range block images from relatively same positions as to the

respective color components of the original image (FIG. 1, "step 105" Col. 8 lines 1-3, Col. 25 lines 22-36 and Col. 26 lines 20-48) as recited in claims 17 and 33.

Therefore, in view of Bonneau et al., it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Moon et al.'s system and method by incorporating the original image as a color image and the video encoding portion to extract the range block images from relatively same positions as the respective color components of the color image in order to achieve high compression, have selective and accurate feature preservation and is computationally efficient (Col.. 5 lines 64-67).

12. Claims 34 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moon et al.

Moon et al. disclose extracting a domain block image (FIG. 1 "Range Block R_i ") from an original image (FIG. 1, "composite image 100") in a size of a first block unit (Col. 3 lines 34-56); extracting a range block image (FIG. 1, "Domain Block D_j ") from the original image in the unit of a second block unit larger than the first block unit with respect to the domain block image (Col. 3 lines 34-56); reducing a size of the extracted range block image to the size of the first block unit (Col. 5 lines 54-61); judging a similarity degree between the reduced range block image and the domain block image (Col. 6 lines 40-54); and forming an improved domain block image based upon a result obtained by converting pixel values as to the reduced range block image based upon

the similarity degree ("maximum degree of similarity", Col. 6 lines 55-61 and Col. 7 lines 31-36) as recited in claims 34 and 35.

Moon et al. does not explicitly teach an image processing program or a computer-readable storage medium for causing a computer to execute an image processing. However, Moon et al. does teach an image compression device comprising storage means, calculating means and control means (Claim 12), which corresponds to a memory and a processor. Since these type of computer devices are controlled by computer-implemented instructions, it would be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art to implement the image processing device as taught by Moon et al. as a computer program stored on a computer readable storage.

Therefore, in view of Moon et al., it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to implement Moon et al.'s image processing system as a computer program stored on a computer readable storage in order to accomplish a real time image processing system by reducing the number of the domain blocks to be evaluated (Col. 7 lines 31-36).

Allowable Subject Matter

13. Claims 4-7, 12-15, 20-23 and 28-31 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
14. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The closest prior art of record failed to teach or suggest the domain block

classifying section classifies the domain block image to a flat portion, a step edge portion, a noise portion, and a texture portion based upon both a standard deviation and a concave/convex degree of the domain block and an edge emphasizing section for executing an edge enhancement processing with respect to the improved domain block image based upon both a relationship between a maximum value and a minimum value of the pixel values within the improved domain block images, and an edge degree of the improved domain block image.

Conclusion

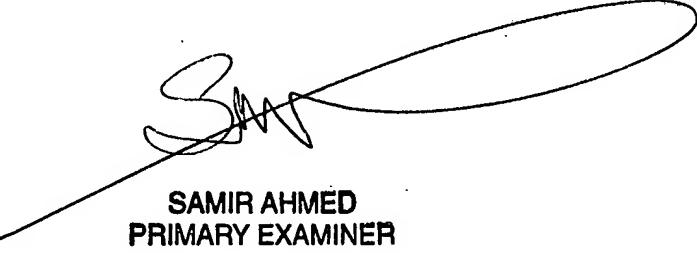
15. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Kim et al. disclose a Fractal Image Compression Device and Method Using Perceptual Distortion Measurement, Claussen et al. disclose a Fractal Image Compression Using Reinforcement Learning, and Jacobs et al. disclose a Method of Encoding a Digital Image Using Iterated Image Transformations to Form an Eventually Contractive Map.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jose M. Torres whose telephone number is 571-270-1356. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday: 8:00am - 4:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jingge Wu can be reached on 571-272-7429. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JMT
03/02/2007



SAMIR AHMED
PRIMARY EXAMINER